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Challenges to Democracy and the Opportunity of a New Participatory Governance in the era of trans-local societies

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Abstract. *The aim of this paper is to propose a theoretical reflection on the possible transformations of democracy in globalized societies. In this direction, the Author outlines the classical approaches to the analysis of democracy and then proposes a criticism of the static picture offered by the liberal conception. In the wake of Charles Tilly, a process-oriented and dynamic conception is proposed, by declining democracy in terms of democratization (and potential de-democratization). In this paper the different theoretical challenges to liberal democracy are also proposed, starting from the participatory conception that assumes the core of the democratic political process in contentious action of organized civil society. Special attention is also paid to the challenge of deliberative democracy in its two versions, liberal and deliberative. The paper then tries to figure out how to adapt these theoretical proposals to the new conditions of trans-local societies, from a rethinking of the concept of democratic citizenship in a post-national key. The paper ends with a reflection on cosmopolitan democracy and the opportunities offered by the major challenge of rethinking global governance in a democratic and participatory way.*

Keywords: Democracy; Citizenship; Political Participation; Deliberation; Global Governance; Social Movements

1. Democracy and Globalization

Reasoning about “democracy today” requires a reflection on that process of substantial transnationalization of social, political and economic dimensions that has long been baptized with the name of globalization. This process inevitably involves changes in the way in which "politics" and "democracy" have been conceived, with obvious repercussions on the very concept of democratic citizenship that was originally configured in the historical dimension of the nation-state. The growing interdependence of social processes and trans-national mobility of goods, services and humans involve a rethinking of the concept of politics as well as a not only theoretical reconfiguration of the governance at a supra- and sub-national scale. Before starting with our reflections, we need to specify what we mean, in this context, by globalization, which constitutes the social framework of these new configurations.

By "globalization" we mean the process of social structuring of a world system in which no event is absolutely isolated and circumscribed to a single geo-political area. Even those processes that originate at the local level can determine effects on the normal course of events in other local systems. But we have witnessed a disproportionate use of that term. Globalization is in fact long been the subject of debate among politicians and mass media, attracting at times an apocalyptic attention and at times an apologetic attention. As Khondker and Robertson write (1998, 26), the situation of globalization is a typical example of how concepts and theories are developed in scientific contexts to be later used in the “real world” in a way that ends up endangering their analytical capacity. So the concept of globalization takes on a pejorative or ameliorative character depending on the convenience. In this paper, drawing only in part on the analytical effort of Beck (2000), we should at least distinguish between globalization and globalism (Engelen *et al.*, 2011; de Nardis, Salento 2013):

By “globalization” we mean the process through which single national sovereignties are differently affected mainly by transnational economic – but also political and cultural – actors, or simply by men and women who, although having a territorial entity as a stable reference, act and think globally, thus contributing to the determination of a growing interdependence between States and national societies. "Globalism", on the other hand, refers to the process of development of a global market that removes and therefore replaces the political action of the states, in the name of a neo-liberal ideology grounded in the idea of the dominance of economics over politics. Through this dominance, the multidimensionality of globalization is associated only with the economic and financial dimension, resulting in a totalizing ideology that removes the most important distinction of the modern era, namely, the distinction between economics and politics articulated in the form of economic power and political power. According to the dictates of globalism we are witnessing an economy that outsources production processes and creates capital through a radical financialization *vis-a-vis* the increasing inability of politics to regulate the routes of the economy. Financialization and de-politicization of the economy are, therefore the most obvious effects of globalism.

From this emerges the irreversible nature of the coexistence of different particular (economic, political, ecological, cultural, etc.) logics that interact on a global scale by building a network of contacts and interdependencies that we call "trans-local". This process is allowed by the combination of several factors, from international trade to the advancement of communication technologies and the activation of transnational solidarity networks that are being built around the claim of human rights. Added to this are the flows of images produced by the culture industry, the emergence of a polycentric policy, the global perception of risk, especially with respect to environmental sustainability and to the danger of intercultural conflicts.

In this context, the concept of democracy is questioned at least in its liberal-formalistic conception. As some scholars observe, as far as the number of democracies in the world is steadily increasing (although still a minority), the effectiveness of democracy as a form of national political organization is openly questioned, while important areas of human activity are progressively organized at macro-regional and global levels (Held 1998, 11). Almost everywhere in the West, we are witnessing a crisis of the traditional mechanisms through which political representation has been built, accompanied by a more drastic separation between political classes and civil society. Electoral abstensionism, anti-politics and the emergence of new populist parties are some of the more visible indicators of these processes. Some social scientists have attempted to systematize these processes by coining also successful expressions, such as "post- democracy" (Crouch 2004) or "counter- democracy" (Rosanvallon 2006), in order to point out the risks as well as the implicit opportunities of the gradual rethinking of the concepts of politics and democracy. Together with a crisis of political representation, we are witnessing a growing capacity of civil society to mobilize through social movements and more or less formal networks capable of giving life even to forms of radical public protest, demonstrating a growing demand for politics and for more spaces of democratic action (de Nardis, Salento 2013; della Porta 2013). These dynamics allow us to reason about a possible reconceptualization of the conditions of democratic organization, both at national, sub-national and supra-, and trans-national levels. In order to do this, we need to briefly review the

different conceptions of democracy and then identify possible alternatives to the historically dominant tradition of liberal democracy.

2. Four classical approaches to democracy

Scholars often speak of democratic regimes as if democracy were a form of immutable political organization. We are convinced that describing democracy simply as a "regime" is restrictive, because it leads to formulate static definitions, resulting from a cognitive compromise between the democratic ideal and its actual fulfillment in different historical contexts. The result is a normative definition, preferred by lawyers and political scientists, which is inappropriate to the substantially "process-oriented" nature of the phenomenon. As Tilly writes, it is not useful to talk about democracy, but rather of "democratization", seen as a dynamic process, always unfinished, and, above all, subject to reversibility. Consequently, any discourse of democratization should take the risk of a "de-democratization" (Tilly 2007).

The empirical analysis of democratic regimes is important to understand the process-oriented nature of the phenomenon. Although still a minority at the international level, the number of formally democratic regimes has increased in recent years; the fact remains that there are undeniable differences between consolidated democracies and newly established ones, just as there are differences between the various "historical" democracies. Adopting a dynamic criterion in the analysis of democracy can therefore help us to grasp the complexity of the phenomenon starting from an analysis of the conditions of democracy. What is needed in order to define a given regime as "democratic"? The concept of democracy is certainly connected to the guarantee of certain citizenship rights, meant as civil, political, as well as social rights. Undoubtedly, the strong link between civil liberties and political rights is fundamental to understand the topic of democracy. For example, the American association "Freedom House", which monitors the levels of democratic development around the world, has developed several indicators of democracy related to the presence of specific civil and political liberties, related, *inter alia*, to the presence of an institutionalized

political opposition and of certain guarantees of individual freedom (Karatnycky 2000). For their part, scholars of democracy have produced several definitions which generally reflect four distinct approaches to the problem (in this regard see della Porta 2013):

a) "Constitutional approach": In this case, scholars pay attention to the legal structure of a regime. From this perspective, we can historically distinguish between monarchies, oligarchies, republics, etc., as well as, in the context of democratic regimes, between constitutional and non constitutional monarchies, or between presidential or parliamentary republics and, again, between unitary and federal states. This approach has many advantages, but its drawback is that it does not distinguish between formal rules and habits, between "formal constitution" and "material constitution". A political class can actually issue rules and then systematically disregard them.

b) "Factual approach" (or substantive approach): In this case scholars pay attention to the living conditions of the citizens and the type of politics that is actually promoted. The central point lies in observing whether the system actually promotes the well-being of citizens, identified with a sufficient level of social equality, individual freedom and safety. The normative dimension compared to the concrete practices is of secondary importance, but some issues remain unresolved: for example, how do we measure the level of democracy in a very poor country, where a relative social equality is however provided, compared to a very rich country that presents higher levels of inequality? By adopting only a factual perspective, it becomes difficult to establish under what sociopolitical conditions we can actually promote social and individual wellbeing for citizens.

c) "Procedural approach": In this case scholars identify a set of governance practices by categorizing them as democratic or non-democratic. Attention is paid mainly to the mechanisms of voting. A regime is therefore democratic if it guarantees universal (male and female) suffrage in free electoral contests. Procedure-oriented scholars, therefore, conceive democracy as an "electoral democracy", while neglecting other important dimensions related to the exercise of democratic freedoms. This makes it difficult to establish a difference with respect to the degree of democracy in countries such as the United States and

India, both electoral democracies, but clearly different in terms of the levels of well-being of their citizens.

d) "Process-oriented approach": In this case it is possible to identify a number of processes that must be activated in order to consider a political community as democratic. Robert Dahl, who is one of the most influential authors in the field of democracy, proposes five process-oriented criteria (Dahl 1998) "effective participation", 2) "equality in voting practices", 3) "right to information"; 4) "control on the political agenda", 5) "universality of suffrage". Dahl does not refer to norms, but to processes, by de facto producing an essentially static checklist, based on evaluations of presence/absence of certain democratic conditions, while preventing that leap in analytical quality, which is based on a real observation of the "degree of democracy".

Actually, to provide comparisons and explanations, we have to give up the logic of check-lists by identifying, on the contrary, some critical variables. Although the process-oriented intent of Dahl is laudable, he tends to fall into a static logic, by offering an ideal picture of the perfect democratic regime that, in broad terms, corresponds to the parameters of classical liberalism.

3. The limits of liberal-democracy

The different approaches described above converge substantially on a static definition of democracy linked to the liberal political tradition. In this regard, the model that scholars tend to identify with the so-called "modern democracy" is that of the democratic rule of law, or mass liberal-democracy. Yet, this is not the only possible form of democracy, but is undoubtedly the form consolidated in the West after the end of World War II. A liberal democratic regime is characterized by the real guarantee of political participation for all adults and by the possibility of dissent, opposition and competition within the political arena.

Starting from this definition, scholars who use a procedural approach, such as Schumpeter (1942), refuse to assign any ethical connotation to democracy, by considering it simply a "method", i.e., a tool to achieve political decisions, according to which individuals obtain the power to decide by means of a

competition that has popular vote as its object. Very similar, although more sensitive to values, is Sartori's definition (1969, 105) – commonly accepted by political scientists – according to which democracy is an ethical-political system in which the influence of the majority is entrusted to the power of competing minorities that ensure it. From this definition emerges clearly the ethical dimension of democracy. It is therefore seen as a system of rules and values; yet, also in this case, Sartori offers a minimum procedural connotation, which binds democracy to the single dimension of electoral dynamics and of the delegation of power through the mechanisms of political representation.

These two definitions, both related to a procedural conception, are compatible with the so-called minimal definition of democracy by which scholars identify a few empirically verifiable aspects which allow us to establish a threshold above which a political regime can be defined as democratic (Morlino 2001). A regime can therefore be counted among the democratic systems when it presents certain characteristics: a) universal (male and female) suffrage, b) free, competitive, recurrent, and correct elections, c) more than one party, d) different and alternative sources of information. In this way, democracy is reduced to the ability to exercise a range of civil and political rights guaranteed by a set of formal rules. "Form", thus, as a guarantee of "substance". The objective of procedural democracy is to produce socially binding decisions through a system of certain rules that allow, through the exercise of an equal vote, to make decisions which would not compromise the systemic structure. Procedural democracy thus ensures an uncertainty about the content of the decision-making process, however guaranteed by the *certainty* of the rules. But in a liberal context, the decisional uncertainty finds a limit: in any case the democratic process cannot lead to the production of decisions that can undermine those that, from Locke onwards, have been considered the two cornerstones of classical liberalism: "private property" and "free market". Having said this, it is clear that liberal democracy declined according to a procedural scheme assumes that there is at least a compromise on the basic rules, while accepting forms of dissent about the contents of this compromise.

Consequently, we can say that a liberal democratic regime is based on the political representation of interests. It is therefore a delegated democracy, in the sense that citizens delegate decision-making powers to a body of specialists who form the political class in the strict sense. Nevertheless, even liberal regimes may provide some form of "direct democracy", such as referendums or laws of popular initiative.

4. Democracy as democratization

Together with Tilly (2007), we believe that we need to put forward a dynamic and process-oriented conception of democracy declined in terms of "democratization" and, at times, of "de-democratization". In this regard, the starting point lies in the relationship between citizens – holders of a corpus of civil, political and social rights – and the state. The change in this two-way system of relations is the core of democratic development in a progressive or regressive direction. The dimension of the conflict between residents of a given territory and political authorities becomes central. The political classes have the task of translating social demands into policies, by transforming interests into rights. In this sense, the central role of politics is in the constant consultation with citizens about their needs. This means that citizens, in turn, must communicate to the political class their own demands, and this can be done through the voting practice, the only one that is really justified in a liberal democratic regime, or through other forms of collective action, such as those that take place in the protest dimension of social movements, or in the consensus-oriented dimension of the pressure groups. We should also consider the compliance levels of political authorities to the inputs that come from the citizens. A system will be more democratic when the political class makes decisions that are consistent with the citizens' demands. In this case scholars speak of "responsiveness", meaning the ability of political elites to meet social demands. So as to assess the level of democracy in a given country taking into consideration the political and institutional responsiveness is not enough, it is also necessary to provide an

answer, together with Tilly (2007, 13-15), to four basic questions corresponding to four analytical dimensions:

a) How broad is the range of demands expressed by citizens? At this level we consider the "breadth" dimension, i.e., the number of citizens who are actually allowed to ask questions to the political system. The more democratic is the system, the broader the number of individuals who enjoy citizenship rights, i.e., civil and political rights.

b) How impartial can the conduct of the State be towards the demands coming from citizens? At this level, we configure the dimension of "equality" within the different categories of citizens. The less discrimination against certain social (ethnic, religious, gender, class, etc.) groups the more democratic the system is.

c) To what extent the expression of social demands receives adequate political protection by the state authorities? At this level we indicate the dimension of "protection", which varies with the repression that the state enacts against certain social groups. A system is more democratic when all citizens enjoy the same level of protection on the part of the institutions.

d) To what extent the process of political translation of social demands engages both the citizens and the state? At this level we finally set the dimension of the "mutually binding consultation", which is much more democratic when citizens and institutions comply with specific obligations both in the formulation of social demands and in their possible translation into public policies. If, on the one hand, citizens must resort to forms of corruption, threats, or violence to obtain benefits and, on the other hand, the state is sensitive to these practices, the system cannot be described as mature in terms of democratic practices.

According to the four analytical dimensions proposed by Tilly, a regime is democratic to the degree that political relations between the state and its citizens "feature broad, equal, protected and mutually binding consultations". From this point of view, the "democratization" of the system presupposes a general shift

towards a broader and more equal consultation (universality of citizenship rights), which should be increasingly protected and mutually binding. On the contrary, we can speak of “de-democratization” when a reverse shift occurs. If, as it has been said, “breadth” and “equality” have to do with the guarantee of the main citizenship rights, then “protection” will be connected instead to the so-called “state capacity”, i.e., the effective capacity of political institutions to implement decisions, by protecting citizens from possible abuses on the part of administration officials or other non-political entities. Actually, either an extremely low level or an excessively high level of state capacity may inhibit democracy. This is because, in the first case, the state would not have the strength to adequately protect the citizens. Similarly, in the second instance, there would be the risk of a state so strong and decisive as to overwhelm mutually binding consultations. The optimal dimension is therefore the intermediate, with a neither too high nor too low state capacity, in which state agents are able to intervene in the resources and non-state activities, without neglecting exchange relations with the citizens.

5. Liberal-democracy challenged

So far we have considered a form of democratic organization that is achieved in the procedures of mass liberal democracies, based mostly on universal suffrage and the logic of representation. But, as Eder notes (2010, 246), democracy is a permanent process of definition and redefinition, which may change over time in the process-oriented logic in which we have showed our main interest. Moreover, liberal democracy is not the only possible form of democracy. It is precisely in those countries where it was first conceived and established that today liberal democracy is criticized both theoretically and in social practices. The West has been long witnessing a weakening of the degree of social legitimacy of the institutions of representative democracies.

We have several indicators of this phenomenon, from the increasing levels of electoral abstentionism to the emergence of many populist and anti-system political parties and movements. This crisis of the functioning of liberal

democratic institutions is accompanied by a structural crisis of the traditional organs of participation and political organization, beginning with mass parties, ideologically and organizationally weakened and less able to aggregate and translate the multiplicity of social interests into policies. This phenomenon brings back some theoretical objections to representative democracy, which although historically dominant, has always been accompanied in its development by other conceptions. A number of phrases are used to define liberal democracy: "participatory democracy" (Pateman 1970; Polletta 2002), "strong democracy" (Barber 2004), "communicative" or "discursive democracy" (Young 1996), to quote just a few possible theoretical alternatives to the classical definition of liberal democracy. All these conceptions are based on a criticism of the logic of delegated democracy, and focus on the need to create opportunities for conflict and, therefore, direct political participation and socially shared spaces of public deliberation. Basically what varies is the perspective from which the role of "interests" is observed, *where* and *how* they are formed and their modes of aggregation and organization.

As Donatella della Porta notes (2010; 2011, 15), in the intense debate on the normative theory of democracy we can identify two subtly problematic dimensions: first, the construction of identities and interests as an exogenous (i.e. external) or endogenous (i.e. internal) democratic political process, and second, the existence, or the lack, of conflict as a fundamental dimension of the political process. By crossing the two dimensions we can identify four ideal models of democracy: liberal, participatory, liberal-deliberative participatory-deliberative.

a) In a "liberal democratic" model, identities develop outside the political process, and are conceived in the forms of representation. It presupposes intermediate bodies (the parties) that aggregate the interests and translate them into public policies in the seats of institutional representation. While accepting the polyarchic logic of a plurality of socio-political preferences, in a liberal context a substantial consensus on a range of interests compatible with the system is assumed, identifying a potentially dysfunctional element in the social and political conflict and in the forms of participation that it involves.

b) "Participatory democracy" is the first theoretical challenge to liberal democracy, in recognizing the multiplicity of social conflicts and the need for a broad involvement of the citizens in the political process beyond election time. The participatory approach to democracy presupposes a substantial separation between social contradictions and political translation, thus assuming a formation of the identities and interests as an exogenous political process.

c) "Liberal-deliberative democracy" is a variant of the classical liberal-democratic conception. Those who look at democracy in this perspective emphasizes the dimension of the endogenous formation of identities and interests in the democratic process. Special attention is paid to the process of formation of interests within the institutions, refusing, however, the majoritarian logic of liberal democracy according to which the process should always end with a vote that divides citizens into majorities and minorities. More than on the output of decision-making, the emphasis is therefore on the discursive potentialities of the democratic process, which is based on a face-to-face debate on the different options. This open discussion can result in an encounter and then in the transformation of these preferences into the discursive process.

d) "Participatory-deliberative democracy" is the result of the combination of the two main criticisms of classical liberal democracy, "participatory" and "deliberative" democracy. In this case democracy is intended as a space of conflict and a meeting place between alternative preferences that are processed and transformed into the discursive exchange of views within the democratic institutions. The "public sphere" is here conceived as the perfect place for conflict between different identities and experiences that are transformed in the process of conflict/debate within the system.

The classical model of liberal democracy proves to be partially inadequate to face the challenges of a constantly changing world, so much so that some scholars have thought about a possible post-democratic phase (Crouch 2004) determined by the substantial weakening of all the major institutions of the representative system in liberal democracies (parliaments, political parties, separation between economics and politics, etc.). The explosion of the processes

of globalization, the increasing pressure of the markets on national policies, the partial weakening of the exercise of state sovereignty, the emergence of a vibrant civil society that refuses to be channeled into the conventional forms of participation, at national, sub-national and transnational levels, require a reflection on possible – at present mostly theoretical – alternatives to the traditional forms of sociopolitical organization. We will now reflect in depth on "participatory democracy" and on the two versions of "deliberative democracy" that are differently eligible to replace or complement the traditional mechanisms of liberal democracy.

6. The challenge of participatory democracy

Since the second half of the twentieth century, many scholars have highlighted the theoretical inadequacy of a democratic conception, which sees the social and political conflict as a dysfunctional element in the organization of an orderly system. Critical of the "dogma of representation", supporters of a conception of participatory democracy lay the emphasis on "participation" and "conflict" as elements of democratic revitalization. Participatory democracy calls into question the liberal principle of delegation and argues for the importance of informed and conscious citizens who are directly involved in decision-making, enjoying a substantial equality of condition. The inevitable oligarchic degeneration of representative democracies is criticized, by laying claim to the classical conception of popular sovereignty exercised through broad and inclusive political participation (Costa 2010, 9).

Proponents of participatory democracy consider the involvement of citizens as fundamental, regardless of the electoral moment (Arnstein 1969; Pateman 1970; Barber 2004). As Pateman observes, all citizens should be granted so many spaces of action as there are spheres of policy-making in a context of full participation, therefore understood as the process in which each individual member of the decision-making process has equal power in determining the outcome of decisions (Pateman 1970, 70-71). As Arnstein observes, along the same line, citizen participation is a categorical term of citizen power; citizens

should be granted free access to information aimed at direct decision-making action, without necessarily bet on their liabilities in favor of professional politicians (Arnstein 1969, 216). Participation has also the function of having citizens socialize with the values and institutions of democracy conceived as a collective action for the common good. Participation becomes a "school of democracy" that produces stimuli to social activism and mutual trust (Barber 2004, 152). This dimension of civic education emerges strongly from research on social movement activists who, in the course of their action, show that they can transform themselves by feeding on participatory democratic virtues emerged from this action (Szas 1995, 154).

Democratic participation becomes the instrument of the working classes for the redistribution of resources and values within a society. Participatory democracy is first and foremost a social conception of politics that is based on the need for free expression of conflicts in the collective practice for equality. In this sense, according to Donatella della Porta (2011, 57-58), it has many elements in common with the conceptions of "associative democracy" (Hirst 1994) and "radical democracy" (Laclau, Mouffe 2001), which emphasize the practices of social self-organization also in replacement of some state functions, focusing on the need for an "agonistic democracy" as a way of peaceful management of conflicts between opposing interests (Mouffe 2005, 20).

Therefore, the contentious and participatory dimension becomes clear in a theoretical framework that emphasizes the separation between social and political space. Conflicting interests and collective identities take shape in the social arena and then they are funneled into participatory political processes.

7. The challenge of deliberative democracy

The criticism of liberal democracy by classical theorists of deliberative democracy, in both its liberal and participatory variants, is different and somehow more complex. The two variants share the emphasis on the transformation of preferences in the course of a discursive process (Drysek 2000a). In both concepts, therefore, there is the assumption that "interests" and "identities" are

formed and transformed in the political process, challenging those notions of democracy that are based on the political need to aggregate interests that are exogenous to the system (Freschi, Raffini 2010; Raffini 2010, 49).

In a context of pluralism, deliberation becomes the only form of democratic legitimacy of socially binding decisions (Cohen 1986; Manin 1987). The principle of "integration" within the democratic process replaces the principle of "aggregation" of interests. The two deliberative perspectives – liberal and participatory – differ in the way they consider the conflict, which is inhibited in the first case, and emphasized in the second, and the different idea they have of the identification of the "natural" place of deliberation: whereas in liberal deliberation the deliberative-discursive process is achieved in the unstructured frame of a public sphere that is far from power relations (Habermas 1962), in participatory deliberation the same process takes place in the contexts defined by a well-organized and often protest-oriented civil society (Dryzek 2000b).

a) The "liberal-deliberative perspective" focuses on the comparison between rational individuals who are convinced of the strength of the better argument to reach a political decision, within a consensual logic. The central point lies in arguments and discourse. Within this logic, participants in deliberative processes convince each other, reaching shared decisions (Gutmann, Thompson 2004). Deliberation is accomplished through horizontal communication flows where individuals, as carriers of a variety of content, exchange their opinions, showing a strong willingness to listen. According to Dryzek (2000b, 64), deliberative or discursive democracy is a dispassionate, logical, reasonable kind of communication. The emphasis on the conflict between private interests disappears and these are discursively connected to the general interest (Cohen 1989).

The liberal-deliberative conception has its roots in the work of Jürgen Habermas, who comes to elaborate a normative theory of democracy from a critique of the instrumental rationality that characterizes the modern era (Habermas 1962, vol. 1984; 1992 vol. 1996). He distinguishes three "worlds" which correspond to different forms of rational action: 1) the "objective world" of the events, 2) the "social world" of the rules, 3) the "subjective world" of

dialoguing people, or “life-world”. The first world is the one where instrumental rationality and a form of goal-oriented rational action, that is a “teleological” action, prevail; in this context individuals relate to the outside world in order to manipulate it. The second world is one in which a normative order, and hence a form of rule-oriented rational action, prevails; in this context, individuals act conforming to the cultural expectations of their social group. The third world, on the other hand, is the place of the symbolic achievement of individuals, where a “dramaturgical” action prevails, conveyed by social interactions as on a theater stage; in this context, a form of discursive rationality, as opposed to mere instrumental rationality, can prevail, giving rise to forms of agreement-oriented communicative action. “Ethics of discourse” and “communicative rationality” are the basis of the model of democracy based on deliberation. In this way, Habermas proposes a way out of both the liberal model of democracy and the republican and communitarian models. If, in the first case, citizens come together in a collective dimension as separate individuals with distinct interests, in the second, individuality and ethical community come together in the one dimension of general interest. The third way suggested by Habermas represents an attempt to integrate individual autonomy and social integration: “The dichotomy individual-society finds a conciliation by which the inter-subjective dimension of communication between individuals acquires centrality, in terms of communicative rationality that becomes the medium of integration” (Raffini 2010, 56). The procedural model of deliberative democracy developed by Habermas is therefore based on the need to institutionalize the argumentative processes in the context of a public sphere made up of a “rational public” (Habermas 1992).

Starting from this premise, Habermas proposes a two-track deliberation: on the one hand, we have the formation of opinions in the context of a public sphere separate from the state; on the other, we have the time of decision-making that takes place through institutionalized mechanisms (representative assemblies). The autonomous public sphere becomes an essentially anarchic communicative space in which to perceive new problems outside the institutionalized channels of mainstream media. It becomes the place of human emancipation in a context of broad participation, and according to an actual agreement-oriented conversational

approach. Public opinion and political decision remain two separate processes that take place in autonomous contexts, respectively the "public sphere" and the "state".

b) The "participatory-deliberative perspective" combines participation and deliberation in the context of substantial equality and social inclusion, starting from a criticism of the bourgeois public sphere developed by Habermas. It calls into question the existence of a single public sphere within which the opinions would be expressed. On the contrary, there exists a "plurality of publics" that compete with each other in an often confrontational way. Several "counter-publics" dispute the truth of the "bourgeois public" (Fraser 1997, 75). The first aspect that differentiates between liberal and participatory deliberation is, therefore, the importance accorded to the conflict between worldviews that take shape in the context of distinct and opposing public spheres. Workers, women, ethnic minorities have historically created their own discursive arenas, by developing counter-discourses as opposed to those used in the bourgeois public sphere. From here emerges a further criticism of liberal-deliberative democracy that, with Habermas (1992, vol. 1996), postulates a dual process, where an informal and extra-institutional deliberation influences institutional decision-making processes. It therefore neglects the activation of deliberative processes that take place outside the institutional dimension in the practices of movement and within groups of volunteers (Cohen 1989; Dryzek 2000b). According to this logic, the real deliberation, one that gives life to the democratic process, is achieved even and especially in contexts that are free from institutional power through participatory actions by citizens organized in associational networks. Also in this case, the discursive logic is fundamental, yet it is supplemented by the logic of protest: the processes of committed and responsible participation include demonstrations and sit-ins, music and comic books, with the same right as parliamentary speeches (Young 2003, 119). Liberal deliberation deems social inequalities irrelevant, whereas, participatory deliberation places social inequalities at the core of the process of conflict. Without attention to the actual extent of inequality, however, also the discussion in deliberative contexts risks reproducing the oligarchic logic of representative democracy, by denying the

oppressed groups the ability to learn the rules of the game thanks to which the deliberative process can be truly horizontal (Young 2000, 156).

Participatory deliberation can be achieved only in an environment of equality, inclusion and transparency within physical arenas of discussion and deliberation in which all those who are potentially interested can rationally argue their preferences in view of the common good (della Porta 2005). Through this opposition to hierarchies, in the emphasis placed on grassroots participation, participatory-deliberative democracy has become the favorite formula of participation and decision of the new social movements. It is no coincidence that the main institutional experiments in deliberative democracy has been made under the pressure of grassroots movements, thus determining a qualitative evolution of the traditional form of participatory democracy, as well as of governance models adopted in modern representative democracies (Gbikpi 2005; della Porta, Gbikpi 2008; Freschi, Raffini 2010; Fourniau, Tafere 2010).

Among these new deliberative practices, the best known is probably linked to the experience of “participatory budgets” launched in Brazil at the beginning of the nineties and subsequently tested in Europe at the level of local governments (Allegretti, Campos, Suqueira 2010). The aim of participatory budgeting is to enable all citizens to take part in the definition of the municipal budget through the construction of local deliberative assemblies and working groups where proposals of public spending are formulated. The municipal government is committed to translate all the proposals into policies. To avoid the risks of delegation and self-exclusion, others have experienced the construction of statistically representative samples of the population to be entrusted with the task of deliberation (Sintomer 2007). In this way also the most isolated and ordinary citizens have access to the decision-making process in a logic of sociological representativeness. Others have experienced the so-called deliberative polling (Fishkin 1991) designed to insert moments of structured deliberation in liberal regimes. The polls are carried out by aggregating a random sample of citizens, and enabling them to inquire and discuss about specific issues upon which they are then called to act. In other cases, there is a recourse to the formation of citizens'

juries, involving from time to time a relatively small number of individuals, selected according to a criterion of sociological representativeness. In still other cases, several forms of electronic deliberation have been experimented, by exploiting the potential of the digital network (Hančič 2010). Although interesting and somewhat effective, all these experiments in deliberative democracy have not been exempt from criticism (Raffini 2010, 68-69), and have often accused of not being able to rid the decision-making process from the hierarchical and manipulative control by institutions. Anyway, these experiments can be seen as important attempts to revitalize democratic conditions, and more than often, they do not come from within the institutions, even if they are ultimately accepted at the institutional level under the influence of civil society organizations and protest movements (de Nardis 2003; della Porta 2007; 2009a; 2009b).

8. Citizenship debated

The concepts of "democracy" and "democratization" are connected to that of "citizenship" making reference to the original condition of an individual's membership in a political community and, in modern times, in a state (Janoski, Gran 2002), therefore, to a territorial dimension today challenged by the pressures of trans-locality. The level of democratization of a political community depends on the "extension" of citizenship. The wider the number of individuals who have the right to be citizens, the more democratic a country is. A truly democratic regime must accept the concept of "enlarged citizenship", by guaranteeing civil and political rights to all citizens, regardless of social categories and/or cultural affiliations. Even modern constitutional states of the nineteenth century presupposed recognition of the rights of citizenship to their populations, although bound to census or gender. In the West, universal suffrage without distinction of gender and social origins was recognized only in the second half of the twentieth century. Even today, not all individuals living in a given territory enjoy political rights; an example is provided by immigrants (also called "stranger citizens") who, while living and working in a particular territory, in many states do not have the opportunity to participate in decision-making through the exercise of voting

rights. These people represent an increasingly large portion of citizens, since the transnational mobility of individuals is now a structural aspect of the contemporary world. This shows that citizenship was invented to “include” but, as Wallerstein points out, everything that includes, often ends up excluding (Wallerstein 1998), by establishing a boundary between those who have the right to be part of a community and those who don’t. Therefore, the concept of citizenship seems to be is at least two-dimensional (Gargiulo 2008): it makes reference to the set of rights and duties assigned to an individual or group and, at the same time, to their membership in a political community. Not all those who belong to a state can enjoy the so-called rights of belonging and not all those who live in a state belong to it legally.

With respect to civil and political rights, scholars use to distinguish between a “passive citizenship” and an “active citizenship”. We can trace the origin of this distinction in the work of Sieyes who, in the middle of the French Revolution, proposed the distinction between passive and active rights: in the first case, he referred to the main civil liberties (freedom of speech, equality before the law, freedom of the press, etc.), in the second, to the possession of political rights (especially the freedom to vote). He came to the conclusion that all the inhabitants of a country should be able to enjoy civil rights (passive citizenship), but not anybody should necessarily enjoy political rights thus becoming active citizens (Sieyes 1789, 193-194). The concepts of passive and active citizenship have now taken on a different meaning related to the recognition and exercise of political rights. Today, by passive citizenship we refer to the legal possession of certain rights (both civil and political). By active citizenship, instead, we refer to the effective exercise of those rights, that is the real participation of citizens in the political life of the community they belong to. Therefore, this distinction reflects the difference between “citizenship as status”, passively acknowledged by the citizens, and “citizenship as a social practice”, determined by the active participation of the citizens in the building of the community they belong to. If passive citizenship is essentially an object of study for historians and jurists, active citizenship is of special interest in the empirical social sciences, because it

assumes the enactment, based on the enjoyment of certain rights, of a set of observable social behaviors.

The concepts of "passive citizenship" and "active citizenship" recall in part the original distinction between a liberal conception of citizenship (Schuck 2002), still prevalent in the Anglo-Saxon countries, and a republican conception of citizenship (Dagger 2002), more rooted in continental Europe, especially in France. In the first case, there is the prevalence of a legal-formalistic vision; whereas in the second case, the vision is more substantive (or substantialistic). Liberal citizenship focuses on the rights of (civil and political) freedom for individuals, whilst republican citizenship puts the emphasis on "community" and on the civic duties that citizens have in it. According to republican communitarianism, a good society is built by the collective action for the common good. In the first case, citizenship is broadly understood as the protection of individuals by the arbitrary power of the state, by emphasizing the individuals' right to pursue their private interests. In the second, the emphasis is placed instead on organized civil society working for the community without selfish ends (Sau 2004, 99).

As Danilo Zolo observes, the liberal concept of citizenship is primarily attributable to the first Continental legal formulations, focusing on the status of citizen (as distinct from the foreigner) who has been associated with a set of passive rights. In the second case, formal rights become a lever for collective political action, thus assuming a connotation of clear interest for sociology and political science (Zolo 1994). This "sociological citizenship" focuses on political participation for the collective good; it no longer refers only to the set of civil and political rights, but it also conceives of democratization as a place of gradual extension of the main social rights, related to welfare institutions.

Problems of space prevent us to dwell on the various historical paths to citizenship and, in particular, to democratic citizenship (see Zincone 1992; Isin and Turner 2002; de Nardis 2013). What interests us here is how to renew a discourse on democracy and citizenship in an era of evident social de-politicization due to some phenomena on which we cannot dwell now, but that

literature has identified in the process of gradual transnationalization of social and political relations and in the radicalization of the process of financialization and the parallel de-politicization of the economy.

The term “citizenship” is often superimposed on that of “nationality”, yet the two concepts are related although analytically distinct. On the technical-legal point of view they reflect two different frameworks: The concept of “citizenship” has been largely confined to a domestic dimension so far, while the issue of “nationality” is often addressed in international law. Citizenship, as a theoretical concept, describes the relationship between an individual and a community, since it represents “cohesion” in a world subject to a radical “fragmentation” (Rubenstein 2004, 4; McMahon 2012). From this point of view, in order to be still effective, citizenship should be disengaged from the domestic dimension to which has historically been bound. Though it is related to the concept of communitarian membership, it is essentially linked to the ability, granted to individuals, to influence a system of power, thus taking part in the decision-making process. But governance is today realized through a set of processes that, as a result of globalization, occur regardless of the size of the national states and are influenced by several (both public and private) social actors within which there are individuals who, although not enjoying the status of citizens in a given territory, are able to act and influence their government. In such an environment, citizens within a state see their ability to control the political community in which they live radically reduced. National citizenship, therefore, undergoes a crisis by imposing a reflection on the need for a transnational (or post-national) reconfiguration of the same concept (Sassen 2003), connected to a rethinking of democratic governance. In a sense, the idea of a post-national citizenship is already present in some attempts to build state-transcending governmental organizations on the model of the European Union, according to a logic of “transborder participatory democracy” (Ichiyo 1993; Rubenstein 2004). In our opinion, the most interesting attempt to conceptualize this new course is provided by scholars who, starting from David Held, propose the construction of a cosmopolitan democracy.

9. The proposal of a cosmopolitan democracy

If democratic deliberation, especially in its participatory variant, can be a useful tool against the risks of oligarchic degeneration of the institutions of liberal democracy, since it is capable of integrating the logic of representation and the logic of contentious participation, it is at the level of local government that it shows its real effectiveness, exposing the essential aspect of political direction of the processes of globalization, as emerged from the above reflections on the concept of citizenship. The node to be solved is that of global democratic governance, since to date, there is no official authority that controls the states' action in the world system, but there are also several non-official actors that affect its operations and policies (Russett and Star 1996, 62).

In this sense, it can be interesting to think about the model of cosmopolitan democracy proposed by David Held. The finding of the risks inherent in the processes of transnationalization of politics and economy leads Held to think systematically about the meanings and models of democracy (Held 1987). Globalization actually limits the ability of states to take binding decisions on important political and economic issues, which are mostly left to the free, and somehow uncontrolled, action of politically non-accountable actors. This requires us to think about a redefinition of democratic standards on a global scale. If states become too small to be able to act in the world arena on an independent basis, it becomes important to reason on the existence of a political system that goes beyond the size of states, which may reproduce, nonetheless, the dynamics of legitimacy and accountability of modern national politics. If non-state actors have the right to participate in political life and contribute to the definition of decision-making within the states, it is necessary to develop an institutional apparatus also at an international level, which may include the different subjectivities that have been taking the whole world as a context of reference for years. The interconnection between states and international organizations has undermined the logic of liberal representative democracy, so that today the decisions of an institution like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) may have a significant

impact on national policies, although without any democratic legitimization. According to Held (1995a; 1995b; 2009), it is necessary to take measures through institutional reform on a global scale, starting from a political strengthening of the United Nations, the only international organization with a potentially democratic structure. At the same time, he proposes the creation of regional parliaments (like the European Parliament) and the identification of measures of cosmopolitan democracy such as international referendums and a world assembly capable of producing legal norms.

He proposes a solution to the absence of a world state based on the assumption that democracy needs an institutional framework that guarantees the rights of citizenship. For example, today different actors (intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental delegations of the United Nations, individual states, social movements) are involved in the issue of human rights, even if they do not enjoy any institutional recognition. The issue can be addressed not by placing the state at the core of the reflection, but individual actors in their direct relationship with international organizations and NGOs. In a cosmopolitan democracy, the global order is divided into multiple networks of power globally involved in issues of general interest, such as health, rights, environment, peace, knowledge, economy, in a context where groups and organizations enjoy a fair autonomy based on the principles of "cosmopolitan democratic law", articulated for each field of action of the social, political and economic spheres. These principles would be granted and legitimized by parliaments and courts (such as the European Parliament and the Court of Justice) connected to the supranational level. Therefore, Held proposes to reconsider the nature of sovereign state authority, by observing some internal and external "disjunctures". In the first case, he refers to the disjuncture that is created between the formal domain of national governments and the concrete practice that today gives body to regional, national, and local economic and political systems (Held 2000, 319). In the second, he detects a friction between the claims of governments to determine their own future and the world economic system (in addition to many international organizations and institutions that act on a daily basis to influence the activities of the states). In this regard, he proposes four external disjunctures:

a) A disjuncture related to the world economy that determines the tension between production system and state authority. Two aspects are relevant in this context: the internationalization of production and the internationalization of financial movements organized by corporations. Today national institutions, sovereign only within a specific territory, have difficulty in producing public policies that are binding for these great actors of the world economy.

b) A disjuncture related to the role of international organizations precisely designed to control transnational activities. These are international political structures that influence the states on specific policies, such as the Universal Postal Union, the International Telecommunication Union, the World Meteorological Organization and other similar, often more influential, bodies, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the world Trade Organization (WTO), and the European Union (EU) itself.

c) A disjuncture related to international law, which – although with poor incisiveness so far - can influence the behavior of individuals, states and NGOs, usually gathering in general declarations signed intergovernmentally, as in the case of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. International law is made up of a set of rules that establish the basis for an orderly system of international cooperation.

d) A disjuncture that Held (ibid., 325) calls “hegemonic powers and power blocs” that often undermine the autonomy and political-institutional integrity of states. Let’s consider, for example, the post-war conflict between the U.S. and USSR and their respective spheres of international domination, but also the quasi-imperial role still claimed by the United States.

In addressing the potentially fragmented and undemocratic nature of these developments, Held (ibid., 327) proposes the use of a “federal model of democratic autonomy”, where the concept of autonomy serves to articulate the foundation of consent as the sole principle of legitimacy and limitation of sovereign power. The fact that individuals should enjoy equal rights and duties implies the sharing of a single structure of action that will enable them to pursue

an individual and collective project. A double process of state reform and reorganization of civil society would be necessary in order to achieve this goal (Held 1989). A dual process of democratization around the principle of democratic self-government that can be operationalized worldwide by building a stable relationship between networks of states and networks of civil society, which may make reference to institutional centers of authority.

10. The opportunity of global participatory governance

The model of cosmopolitan democracy is undoubtedly ambitious in that it presupposes an agreement between the states on an institutional reform that, by strengthening the powers of international governmental organizations (primarily the UN), may formalize a substantial transfer of sovereignty to supranational institutions. At the same time, such a "federalist" model is able to combine the need for a political government of transnational social processes and the need to identify forms of legitimacy of governmental bodies through the construction of participatory-deliberative arenas. In the model of cosmopolitan democracy, therefore, international civil society would play a central role, thus becoming a key player in decision-making processes.

The first complaints against the ambiguities in the functioning of the world political system emerge precisely from those networks of social movement that, since the nineties of the twentieth century, have challenged the undemocratic nature of some international governmental organizations, by proposing a global reform in a democratic and participatory direction (de Nardis 2003; 2005; Held and McGrew 2007; della Porta et.al. 2009). The wealth of research on the movement for global justice has shown the great demand for democratic politics on the part of these movements. The individual activists interviewed during the various European Social Forums were mostly cohesive in their willingness to put their trust in those supra-national political institutions capable of combining efficient decision-making and democratic consultation of the people organized into multiple social networks. It is no coincidence that the highest levels of trust were put in the United Nations, but also in another possible political Europe (de

Nardis and Alteri 2006), expressing a sort of "critical cosmopolitanism". It is evident that the weakness of liberal democracy at the supranational level requires an urgent redefinition of global governance built around public arenas of participatory and deliberative democracy (della Porta 2007, 110). The presence of an international civil society that sees the world as a participatory horizon has become a fact that the international political classes have to take into account (Shaw 1994; Anheier, Glasius and Kaldor 2001). In the last decades, the number of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) has exponentially grown along with the so-called transnational social movement organizations (TSMOs) that are now able to exert pressure and influence on various levels of the international decision-making processes (Princen and Finger 1994, 1; Sikkink and Smith 2002; Held and McGrew 2007, 35). From this point of view, as Talberg and Uhlin observe (2011, 212), the deliberative quality of the actors of the global civil society can contribute to the emergence of a global public sphere (see also Alteri and de Nardis 2011) required for the definition of global democratic governance.

The project of democratic development within and beyond the states presupposes the existence of global institutions that give individuals the status of "inhabitants of the world" as a part of a post-national conception of citizenship. In this direction, the institutions of a new global democracy should give voice to social issues without considering the territorial and national belonging of individuals (Archibugi 2003, 8). This aim requires the immediate implementation of some important reforms involving a strengthening of the United Nations and the abolition of the veto power that some superpowers in the Security Council enjoy today. We need to find the necessary formulas to give greater power to the representatives of the countries in the developing world. It would be important to implement some democratic practices in the international system, such as transnational referendums on issues of particular relevance. We need to build an international army which can be really liable towards the United Nations. It is also necessary to assume the existence of a parliamentary assembly with consultative powers (on the model of the European parliament) and identify intermediate spaces of deliberation within which non- governmental social organizations can play a decisive role.

The objective difficulty to proceed in this direction cannot, however, absolve the international political classes and social scientists from concretely reflect on the need for a world government that may meet the characteristics of a deliberative and participatory democracy.

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